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LAYS

BY E.C.K.S.





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LAYS.

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E. C. K. S.

"FIDIBUS NOVIS."

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LAYS.

Rebeille.

 IS rosy dawn. Dull leaden sleep,
Spread thy swift wings and flee
Where day is sinking in the deep.
This daylight world for me !

And let me climb some airy height,
And breathe the breath of morn,
And see the myriad dew-drops bright
That sparkle on the thorn.

Not fairer shines Arabia's pearl,
Not royal Golconda's gem,
Than ye, from every lowly herb,
From calyx, leaf, or stem.

Now bursts from every bush and spray
The chirped or warbled song ;
The clear sky pours a blither lay,
Thrilling the breeze along.

Who—who would lose the matin hymn
All nature sings to God
For useless sleep or lazy dream ?
Then rise and walk abroad.



Sunrise on the Nile.



THEBES slept, her hundred gates were
closed,

The last watch of the night was near
its end,

And weary watchmen waited for the morn.

On Nilus' plain the huge Colossi sat,

Mountains and islands since have sunk and risen,

But they sit now as then—silent.

The cold dews trickled from their granite arms.

Now earliest dawn appears o'er eastern summits,

The stars have fled, the twilight brief is past,

The hills are tipped with mellow rosy hues ;

And now the loftiest obelisks are bathed

In the descending sunlight's golden flood.


Now full on each strange monumental form,

On tomb-like temples, avenues of Sphinx,

He shines—he shines on all alike,

But he evokes no voice except from one—

From the memorial of Amenophis,
The Memnon's statue, swell the matin notes
Of welcome and of praise. Mysterious sounds
By travellers in different ages heard.
'Tis thus, like these Colossi, mute and cold,
Oft sits the human soul, wet with the dews of
 grief,
Till love doth send his welcome, cheering ray,
With gladsome light and vivifying warmth;
Then from the heart the unexpected song
Wells joyful forth, with speech and language,
Or perhaps without.



The Yacht.



ON board, and let the favouring gale
 Waft us both swift and far,
 The world and I would part awhile,
 So let us cross the bar.

With charts and sextant, compass, log,
 Chronometers and all,
 We'll sail away till England's shore
 Sink behind ocean's ball.

The world and we will change no news
 For many days to come,
 A throne may fall, republic split—
 We still shall cleave the foam.

Or death, who, like an albatross,
 Can wing the lonely deep,
 May light on board our little craft,
 She will the secret keep.

The hap of wind our course may shape
To Shetland or Faroe,
To distant Iceland's mountain tops,
Her fires, her ice, and snow.

Or farther still, through northern mists,
To lone Jan Mayen's Isle ;
Or southward, where, in sunny seas,
The bright Azores smile.

Where the orange and the myrtle grow
On sad Madeira's shores,
Or Teyde girt with clouds below
O'er Tenerifa towers.

Or through mid-ocean to the place
Where monstrous sea-weeds swim,
Which sailors of constructive brain
Have shaped to Python grim.

Beneath my yacht the Atlantic waves,
Neptune's own hunters, bound,
The sea in far perspective laves
The sky on all sides round.

The Forget-me-not.



MID pastures, cots, and flocks, and trees,
 Dark Danube poured his turbid flow,
 Above him sunlight, birds, and breeze,
 And greedy fish in depths below.
 Along those flower-enamelled meads,
 Prince Lucius, then Pannonia's pride,
 Forth, with attendant maidens, leads
 Julia, the boast of Dacia wide.
 Flow, flow, thou brimming river,
 Thy fertile banks along,
 While time lasts, cease shall never
 Thy black stream deep and strong.

The halls of her ancestral towers,
 On high and solemn festal day,
 Oft Julia decked with boughs and flowers ;
 In search of these abroad they stray.
 Branches of varied leaf and hue,
 Blooms, purple, orange, yellow, red,
 Were gathered ; then they sought the blue,
 Blue flowers by Danube's river bed.

Flow, flow, thou eddying river,
Thy crumbling banks along,
While time lasts, cease shall never,
Thy black stream, deep and strong.

Strange wealth of *Myosotis* blue
The Princess saw and coveted,
Upon a turfy isle it grew,
Just made an islet by the flood.
Prince Lucius lightly sprang to cull
The flowers the fair so much desired,
Collected all, tossed to the bank,
Felt the turf sink ere he retired.
Flow, flow, thou cruel river,
Thy treacherous banks along,
While time lasts, cease shall never
Thy black stream, deep and strong.

The gulf is wide, the isle fast going,
Two realms no timely help can bring,
The waters o'er the grass are flowing—
She sees him sinking slowly in.

“ Farewell, my love, my bride, my all !

See there thy flowers ! forget me not ! ”

He sinks beneath the eager flood ;

They bear her senseless from the spot.

Flow, flow, thou fatal river,

Thy mournful banks along,

While time lasts, cease shall never

Thy black stream, deep and strong.

Long years the Princess ruled a warlike race,—

The race that shortly conquered Rome ;

A Roman sculptor carved his cenotaph,

Dacian, Pannonian maidens him bemoan.

But now his name is near or quite forgot,

The brutal Turk hath broken down his tomb ;

The flower, the ever dear Forget-me-not

Alone records him with its annual bloom.

Flow, flow, exhaustless river,

Thine endless banks along,

While time lasts, cease shall never,

Thy black stream, deep and strong.

Primeval Sketches.



SHORELESS ocean, thick cloud
shadowed,

Uninterrupted rolled its leaden waves
The world around. Scarce broken silence ruled
The wingless air. Strange fish flabbered,
And unclean monsters crawled, Britannia,
Where now thy yellow and thy ruddy corn
Waves in the breeze that wafts the reaper's song.

The Cumbrian peaks, lone ocean islets then,
Rose from the weltering waves, and gave a home
To the sea-mew, the gull, the gannet, and the
orc ;


From their spray-beaten nests upon the rocks
At morn they rose in clouds, to distant ken,
As though the islets smoked. Hoarse cries and
shrill

Vexed the air. Upborne on wind and wave
The livelong day, with hooked beak and cruel,

They sought their finny food on waters waste.
From these same peaks, a hundred hamlets now,
And towns, the thronging hives of busy men,
Mansions and parks salute the gazer's eye,
While heaven-pointing spires command the
 thought
To rise yet higher still.

Next, forest-crowned
With open grassy glade and watered meads,
Where well-known streams meandered then, as
Thou found'st thy realm, Britannia, [now,
And here thou cam'st to dwell, but subjects none,
Save bear, hyæna, elk, and mammoth hadst.
Man was not, or he skulked unseen in woods
Or caverns of the rocks, untutored yet
And savage e'en as they. Matin or vesper bell,
Or that which gives the passing hour a tongue,
Was heard not ; nor bark of dog who guards
All night his master's home, trusty and wakeful ;
Nor bleat of flocks, nor low of horned herds.
No coracle upon the rivers floated yet,
Nor cromlech, foul with human sacrifice,
Cast o'er the mind its stern religious fear.

The Lawyer's Wig.

N Edinbro' town they live in flats,
 Though sharp enough, — knows ;
 And little girls keep little cats,
 As you may well suppose.

Two damsels, bright as — — here,
 Lived in a flat above ;
 They had a little kitten dear,
 It *was* a little love.

'Twas May ; the air was soft and warm,
 Sunny and bright the day ;
 The windows all were open wide
 To let the breezes play.

The damsels, with broad ribbon blue,
 Tied pussy's body round ;
 They lowered it from the window sill,
 Slow dangling, towards the ground.

Just then, the Fates they willed it so,—
And wicked are they ever,—
An advocate had donned the wig
He wore to make him clever.

And from his casement, just beneath
Pussy in air suspended,
He did protrude his learned wig—
And she on it descended.

The kitten seized with ready claw,
The wig was fairly caught,
The frightened damsels quickly saw
The mischief they had wrought.

Instantly pulled the kitten back—
“ Poor kitten, frightened so ! ”
The lawyer looking up, Alack !
Saw how his wig did go.

And such a case in all his books
Having discovered never,
Nonplussed, dumbfounded, he exclaimed,
“ Well, really ! Did you ever ? ”

That day, the wig was found not far
Beneath the window sill ;
No one knew how it had got there,
No, and they never will.

The lawyer told his wondrous tale,
Which nobody believed ;
By men of sense, what lawyers say
Is never much received.




The Lighthouse.

REEF of rocks, oft vexed with tempest,
 Outwork of an ironbound shore,
 Countless surges, Neptune's mightiest,
 Leap upon thee, flood thee o'er,
 Vainly raging. In their hour
 Of maddest fury, thou art steadfast,
 Though black as night the storm may lower,
 Though green sea-mountains, white foam-
 laden,
 Urged by the blast's resistless power,
 Crash upon thee, strive to shatter—
 Calm and changeless midst the tumult,
 Thou their hosts dost break and scatter.
 "Come ye no further," God hath said,
 "Here, here, shall thy proud waves be stayed."
 On thy farthest, topmost point
 Fixed and fastened, rock to rocks,
 Stands the lighthouse, tall and taper.
 Fifty winters' tempests' shocks

Have not moved it. The boldest waves
Vainly essay to scale its curved side,
Vainly conflicting seas enwreath
Its base in a tormented tide.
When fogs the sea and sky have mantled,
From its summit sounds the gong.
When night the swelling deep has veiled,
From its summit, miles along
Those pathless waters shines its beacon-
Light to warn, and light to guide
The homesick sailor to the haven
Desired for weary months upon the ocean
wide.

Friendly light, thou'rt like that other
Light that shineth o'er life's sea,
To warn, to guide us to another
Port—of immortality.



A Tale.




FROM my ocean home I was summoned
away

By the sun, to join in the young winds'
play,

They bore me aloft so high, high, high,
Through the sapphire blue of the summer sky.
Through the ruby red of the morn and even.
And radiant gold—the hue of heaven,
Through the purple gloom of the dark, dark night,
And the silver fields of the clear moonlight,
Through the cold chill grey of the earliest dawn,
Above the mountains, the eldest born :
Not so high man floats in his bubble balloon,
Which brings him no nearer the laughing moon.
I entered the cloud, the wet thick cloud,
I went to the home of the thunder loud,
Where the lightnings play, and the terrible hail,
Where the hurricanes dwell that swoop on the
sail,

I fell in round, round drops of rain
On the thirsty fields, was exhaled again ;
I was frozen to needles of wool-like snow,
And cast upon the mountain's brow,
To fall with the avalanche down below
On icefields none but the eagles know.
In the glacier locked, farewell to hope !
How slowly I moved down the rocky slope
To the woods and pastures, joy for me !
There at last I gained my liberty.
With millions of others just set free,
I started at once for our home, the sea ;
We leaped down rocks, we were scattered in
spray,
We rested in dew on the flowerets gay ;
In limestone caverns under the ground,
In sand, in gravel, and chalk we were found ;
We rose in the wells so fresh and cool
When suns were hottest. In quiet pool
Or lake we slept. In rivers we rolled
Through broad, broad lands with names untold,
'Till we got to our home, the family home—
The great salt sea, where the great fish roam.

The Coalminer.

ITTLE taught and almost naked,
 Oddly crouched in the narrow seam,
 Where the danger-telling lamp
 Throws out a pallid sickly gleam.

Life in hand, of perils careless,
 Of fiery or of choking gas,
 Of flood's inburst, or living burial,
 If roof or shaft crumble in mass.

The falling glass that ushers in
 For us the soft south-western gales,
 Is harbinger, too oft, for him
 Of a death at which the hearer pales,

To him familiar. At the kirk
 Of the next village full a score
 Of friends, struck by one common fate,
 A single sod has covered o'er.

Far from help, in foul and sultry
Labyrinth of lonely gloom,
Seeing little of earth's beauty
From his boyhood to his tomb,

He wins the bread for bairns and wife,
As block by block he wins the coal.
The wheels of all our modern life
Without him soon would cease to roll.

From those black lumps will wake and glow
Rays darted when the sun was young,
For ages stored in depths below,
Forces which else through space were flung—

Which cause earth's northern wastes to teem
With men of rough and hardy worth ;
Which lend to Arctic nights a beam,
For street and church, for hall and hearth ;

Which mould and shape the engines strong,
Whose ponderous stroke or nimble course
Have multiplied, or will ere long,
Fourfold the sum of human force ;

Which forge the iron, pump the mine,
 Make roads of steel, and speed the train ;
Which drain the marsh or polder wet,
 Which draw the plough and grind the grain ;

From deepest well or distant springs,
 From reservoir or mountain lake
Bring floods to adorn and purify,
 And the dry city's thirst to slake ;


Which drive o'er longest reach of sea
 To western world or eastern Ind
House, barrack, castle, ceaselessly
 Against the strong unwilling wind ;

Which hurl the might of cultured power
 On strongholds of barbaric wrong,
Though distant far, but which, alas !
 To brothers' discord too belong ;

Which clothe the dwelling and the race,
 Produce the paper, print the page,
And, thought-diffusing, urge apace
 Alike to good and ill the age.

The Meadow.

Ridet, floretque.


FTER winter drear
 The emerald hue
 Of each fresh risen blade
 Tells spring is near ;
 The daisies new,
 In star-like clusters laid,

 Shine silvery white ;
 Flower-loving May
 From her full lap throws down
 Buttercups bright ;
 The children stray
 To reach the golden boon.

The lengthening grass,
With sorrel red,
Blossoms its fleeting day ;
The sun russets
Each waving head
With glowing zenith ray.

From the lark's nest low,
O'er which he sings,
The young are fledged and flown.
'Tis time, for now
The mower brings
His scythe. All is cut down.

A Valentine.

IGHT weeks are well-nigh past
 Since dark St. Thomas' day,
 A brighter sun at last
 Holds warmer, longer sway :
 His loftier path, his brighter shine,
 Proclaim the near St. Valentine.

The lively birds, at cheery morn,
 Chirp and twitter on the thorn ;
 They sing the secret power of spring,
 And flirt and ogle on the wing.
 Love tunes their song, love prompts my line,
 They choose, like me, their Valentine.

And sweet the power that prompts the song,
And sweet the power that tunes the lay,
Willing we own its influence strong,
Willing its every law obey.
Love pours the song, love builds the line,
Love strives to please its Valentine.

The placid lake at matin time,
Reflects, as bright, the beam that strikes it ;
Just so, from a good Valentine,
One's love's reflected, if she likes it.
—— — is mine, my song is finished,
My love's reflected undiminished.



A Legend of St. Michael.



HERE Brittain joins Normandy,
 Out of a waste of wet sea sand,
 Or yeasty waves, as the tide may be,
 Two islands rise, rocky and grand.
 Tombelaine, all weed o'ergrown,
 With its adders and tombs, desert and lone,
 And St. Michel with its crest so fair,
 Its beautiful church high in the air,
 Its fort, quaint town, and guns antique,
 Which could say much if they would speak.
 As I gazed on both from the neighbouring beach,
 Seeking for some one able to teach
 Why, of twin islands, one should be lone,
 And the other should have its church and town?
 From an honest priest I chanced to meet,
 I learned the legend I now repeat:—
 “Here,” said he, where we are walking,
 The archfiend, Satan, our deadly foe”—
 (He crossed himself as he was talking),—
 “Met with St. Michael long ago.

Foot to foot, and hand to hand,
Shield to shield, and brand to brand,
Now in the air and now on the land,
Oft had they fought, as well you know ;
But this time wily Satan planned
The sort of contest I shall show.
'Choose,' said Satan, 'either isle,
Whichever you best may please,
And build thereon the noblest pile
That ever was fanned by a breeze.
Upon the other island, I
And mine our art will try,
And when again the midday sun
Shall flame where it flames now,
The final victory shall be won
By him whose work shall fairest show.'
In earth and hell they build so much,
In heaven they build so little,
The tone of Satan had a touch
Of sarcasm—just a tittle.
But Michael to the plan assented,
'Twas scarcely done ere 'twas repented.
When the sun rose on Tombelaine,
He lighted a palace fairer than thought,

The roof with gold was all aflame,
Silken banners cunningly wrought
Floated from stately domes and towers.
Carvèd capitals of flowers
Adorned the fluted columns' row,
Tall statues crowned each portico,
Stood alone, or in niches on all sides round
From the crest of the roof almost to the ground,
On terraces in the garden too,
With vases of flowers of brightest hue,
In fairy grot and cool alcove,
And mazes where the guests might rove.
The very air, his own dominion,
With birds of every colour and pinion
Satan had filled. Instead of the waste
Of sea and sand, on every hand
With wondrous skill his glamour placed
Vistas grand of a classic land
Fair as Claude de Lorraine's dream.
Within 'twas fairer still, I deem,
The rainbow and the evening sky,
The gorgeous bird and butterfly
Had lent their tints, and painters skilled
With graceful forms the windows filled.

The artwork of ages of slow-moving earth
In the hours of a night had its wonderful birth.
Alto and basso-relievos were found
Each hall and corridor around,
Frescoes, beauteous or grotesque,
Ceilings of Rubens or Raphaelesque.
But my time and words fail to portray
Its beauties blended in bright array.
Birds and beasts, and trees, and flowers,
In cedar and sandal wood, filling its bowers ;
The fretworks of marble, the pavements inlaid
With malachite, jasper, onyx and jade ;
Fountains of free or chaste design,
Flowing perfume, or flowing wine ;
The buhlwork and the marqueterie,
The ivory and ebony,
The frosted silver, bronzes, ormoulu,
Pietra dura and mosaics too,
Enamels, gems, and porcelain—
Here, too, I must break off again.
The carpets soft of pleasant hue,
The hangings of crimson, purple, and blue ;
The velvets and the damasks fair,
The gilding and the mirrors there ;

The flowers exotic relieved with green,
The statues and couches placed between.
Such palace there hath never been
For sultan, emperor, czar, or queen.
Menial troops attentive stand
To present the fruits of every land
Heaped on plates of golden ware,
To offer the wines so choice and rare ;
While Circassian maidens fair
Receive them from the jewelled flagons,
Embossed with ornamental dragons,
In glasses, each with satyr, Bacchi plenus,
Or wine god, nymphs, and old Silenus,
Or Cupids at their tricks, and mother Venus.
Each wind, each stringed instrument
That e'er discoursed to the ear's ravishment ;
And vocal harmonies, mixed with solos sweet,
Charm the delighted air. The feet
Of dancers graceful as Terpsichore
From time to time move to the melody.
Elsewhere the tragic and the comic Muse
Shadow the dark or droll for those who choose.
Nothing, in short, that eye, or ear, or sense
Could please, but Satan stored within that house
immense.

On St. Michel the little church
Stood just as it stands now.
St. Michael felt he was left in the lurch,
Confusion sat on his brow.
Said Satan, jeering, 'miserable sinner,
To-day, perhaps, you'll stay with me to dinner.'
The Saint replied not. In his sore dismay
He kneeled and fervently began to pray.
And as he prayed that palace fair
Grew fainter in the morning ray,
He prayed till noon, then in the air
It vanished—vanished quite away.
Blank horror seized the demons foul,
They fled to hell with screech and howl.
From opening heaven an angel band
Descend ; within the church they stand,
And with due rite hallow the fane
To God in good St. Michael's name.
So Tombelaine is cursed and lone
While St. Michel is fair to see.
The bad man's glory soon is gone,
The good man's lasts eternally."

A Summer Thunderstorm.



ON Lucerne's lake the morn broke fair
 And cloudless. Hot and still the air.
 Scarce sound was heard save the
 cicada's song,
 And Reuss's murmur as he rolled along.

The sheep-bells tinkle from their airy ways,
 The drowsy herdsman hums his drowsy lays
 Where the great rocks give shelter to his head ;
 Hushed are the rills, dry in each gravelly bed.

The deep wave lies in purple shadow darkling,
 Or, stirred by rower, in the sunlight sparkling ;
 On the green pastures, no fresh breeze
 Moves even a leaf of the walnut trees.

But see ! one lofty peak is girt with cloud,
 Quick gathering, all the rest they shroud,
 The wind arises with a sudden gust,
 In spiry circles flies the whirling dust.

Smaller and smaller grows the traveller's ken.
The deepening gloom strikes awe on beasts and
men,
The thunder, distant, seems beneath the
ground,
'Tis nearer now—the mountains echo round.

Fiercely the tempest rushes down the lake,
St. Mary, help that boat the shore to make !
'Tis veiled in mist. Leaps forth the blinding
flash,
Then, as of mountain fallen, the instant crash.

Again the fire, the crash—the crash, the fire,
As if the day of great Jehovah's ire
Were come. The hail descends. Now pours
Most pitiless the rain. Reuss roars.

The torrents all the hills blockade,
O'erflow the dikes themselves have made ;
Now heaven's dread artillery withdraws,
The hail has ceased, the rain begins to
pause.

Then clears the air ; the boat floats overturned ;
Blue sky is there, where late the lightning burned ;
The bow of promise spans the gloomy cloud,
Bright o'er the lake, where still the storm is loud.


The raindrops in the sun are glittering now,
Birds sing him welcome upon every bough ;
While the cool freshness of the fragrant air
Pours gladness on each well-tuned spirit there.

Fluellen.



The Calm.

Sea.


 IS calm on the heaving sea,
 The waves sleep tranquilly
 On the bosom of the deep ;
 Restless waves, all lulled to sleep.
 The ships, by currents drifted,
 Are scarcely rolled or lifted ;
 No foam is at their prow,
 All their sails hang now
 Idly down. Flags droop.
 On forecastle and poop
 Men lounge as they please,
 Or whistle for the breeze.
 In the steamship's wake,
 On the path her paddles make,
 Rests her long smoke trail,
 Growing pale and more pale,
 Till it blend far away
 With the haze-cloud grey.

*The Calm.**Land.*

'Tis calm on the pool
Where the cattle stand to cool
Their hot hoofs. Calm on the hill,
There no wind turns the mill.
'Tis calm on the river,
The aspens scarce quiver ;
The ivied tower of the church,
The drooping willow and birch,
The villa's belvidere,—
All are mirrored there ;
Bridge, arches, balustrade,
Inverted are portrayed
In the wave. That lazy crow,
See him flying down below
In a sunken world as clear
As that we dwell in here,
Illumined by another sun,
Lightly veiled, like our own.

flowers.

BROADCAST, ye flowers, He hath
 sown you,
 On every spot of earth hath thrown
 you,

Such grace of form, such varied hues,
 And scent hath given, we cannot choose
 But strangely feel your potent spell.
 Ye are sent by one who loves us well.
 My infant steps from morn till night,
 Through pasture and by hedgerow bright
 Ye wiled to stray. In cornfield gay,
 Or by the dusty turnpike way,
 In rustic lane, or bosky dell,
 In woods by mossy-bordered well,
 By brawling burns and tinkling rills,
 O'er spongy moors, and grassy hills,
 Through thicket dense, and shady grove,
 Ye lured my boyhood oft to rove ;
 But now I pass you careless by,

Scarce conscious of your beauty nigh,
Perched on old ruined castle-walls,
On crags in the spray of waterfalls,
On drifting dunes of barren sand,
In salt-marshes, neither sea nor land,
On cliffy rocks, brown, white, or grey,
Where scarce the goat can find a way ;
Floating on river, lake, and mere,
Here and there in the pinewoods drear ;
In torrid waste by rock surrounded,
On islands of verdure glacier-bounded.
As glowworms glimmer on the ground,
As lamps the darkness lighten round,
As jewels swart India's coronet gem,
Or stars night's rarest diadem,
And each by contrast brighter gleam ;—
So you, ye flowers, the fairer seem
When ye in desolation dwell.
In distant oasis, on pathless fell,
Ye tell the friendless traveller lone
Of Him to whom alike are known
The marshalled hosts of starry night,
And roving wildbird's distant flight.
When on some spring-day, warm and calm,

The aged, half-bedridden man,
Steps forth with feeble, tottering gait,
And weary soul, for him the grave doth wait,
He feels your vernal glory, but with pain
That it for him no more shall glow again.
When I too, reader (for we must),
Shall mingle with the common dust,
In quiet spot, upon my tomb,
Yearly may lowliest flowerets bloom,
Waking from winter's sleep to tell
That I alive have loved them well,
And that, like them, again I'll rise,
When spring shall come, and fairer skies.



St. Sebastian.



IN the sunshine, St. Sebastian,
 Sparkling waves around thee dance ;
 Isle and headlands, town and moun-
 tains,
 Every viewer's eye entrance.
 Busy Basque and stately Spaniard
 Pace below thy fortress old ;
 Bright the eyes which glance beneath
 The dark mantilla's graceful fold ;
 E'en thy fort appears to smile,
 Peace and gladness rule the while.

Sebastian, in the tempest hour,
 When the sky doth o'er thee lower,
 Thy fixèd rocks appear to cower
 Beneath the angry sea-god's power.
 The raging wind, the thundering main,
 Assail thee oft, assail in vain.
 Thou with ease such foes repellst
 When their wrath doth wax the fellest,
 And a frown sits on thy brow,
 A sterner spirit ruleth now.

Sebastian, in the war-god's hour,
 When the hills around thee shake,
Demon-engines dread in power,
 Iron storm about thee make.
Thou returnest blow for blow,
 While thy solid rocks do quake,
Iron storm upon the foe ;
 Farthest alpine echoes wake.
When thy lightnings from thee bound,
Hell rejoiceth at the sound.

In the sunshine, St. Sebastian,
 Sparkling waves around thee dance :
Isle and headlands, town and mountains,
 Every viewer's eye entrance.
Busy Basque and stately Spaniard
 Pace below thy fortress old ;
Bright the eyes which glance beneath
 The dark mantilla's graceful fold ;
E'en thy fort appears to smile,
Peace and gladness rule the while.

Come !



OW come, my love, no longer stay,
Haste thee, haste thee, come away.

For love awaits thee, love is fair
As fairest flowers of spring,
In wood, or field, or garden, e'er
Were seen rare blossoming.
'Tis fairer than the silver moon,
Or golden summer-shine,
When, shed in floods by brilliant June,
It falls on landscape fine.
For love awaits thee, love is fair
As fairest things that be
On earth, or in the upper air,
Or deepest depths of sea,
'Tis fairer than the diamond's ray,
Or gleam of priceless pearl ;
For love, for love, then, come away,
No longer stay, sweet girl.
For love awaits thee, love's more fair
Than aught on earth we see ;
In heaven it was begotten there,
In heaven its home must be.

So come, my love, no longer stay,
Haste thee, haste thee, come away.

For love awaits thee, love is sweet
As sweetest things that be,
Sweeter than rose, or violet,
Or spice of eastern sea.
Sweeter than Philomela's song,
First songster of them all,
When it sweetest thrills the woods among,
Each listener to enthral.
'Tis sweeter than the loveliest lay
Which woman's lips can pour,
Though that from heaven, the poets say,
Hath angels drawn before.
There is naught else the heart of man
Can think or feel or know
So sweet as love, then while we can
We'll taste it here below ;
Taste first below and next above,
For it is the air of heaven.
The breath of God, it is but love,
And now to us 'tis given.

Then come, my love, no longer stay,
Haste thee, haste thee, come away.

My Lassie.



LITHE was she on the oak-crowned hill
 Where strongest breezes play,
 And blithe was she by the banks of ——
 Where dimpling eddies stray.

Blithe was she in the summer's heat,
 And blithe in winter's cold,
 Blithe in the budding time of spring,
 Blithe when the leaves grew old.

Blithe at the board, blithe in the town,
 Blithe out and in was she ;
 But blithest ever when alone
 She found herself with me.


Absent.




HE night is fair,
 The wind blows cool,
 The moon is there,
 Her orb is full,
 Cloudless her shine
 And silvery white,
 A perfect coin
 From mint of light.

To aught that's dead
 Beyond compare ;
 Be't rather said,
 Like maiden rare.
 With stately mien,
 Serene on high,
 She walks a queen
 Along the sky.
 Still, still the same,
 As pure and bright,
 As God did name,
 To rule the night.

Awhile some clouds
Have dimmed her light,
And now in crowds
Extinguish quite.
Now she looks forth
Like veiled bride.
—— —, why art
Thou from my side ?
Remote from thee
I sing alone,
My song is free,
But sad its tone.
For thee I pine,
—— —, I mourn,
My soul from thine,
My soul is torn.



Look Out !


 THOU graceless imp, for ever twanging
 Thy tiny bow,
 I think thou well deservest hanging ;
 'Deed dost thou so !
 Upon my soul, thou naughty Turk,
 Thy shafts so shower,
 I do not twenty minutes' work
 Within the hour.
 And yet I thank thee for thy art.
 One shot of thine
 Transfixèd my Amanda's heart
 And fixed on mine.
 For that good bolt, thou darling boy,
 Thy praise I'll sing ;
 How will the rogue the next employ ?
 It's on the string !

The Old, Old Clock.



HE stalwart men are dead ; all, all are
dead,


And dead are those who could remember
them.

Who dug the ore from the darksome mine,
Who cut the wood in the forest glade,
Who with fire, and lathe, and file,
Who with saw, and chisel, and plane,
Cunning to work in metal and wood,
Made my wheels turn, and pendulum to swing.
I've ticked their pulses all away,
Long, long ago, as I tick to-day.

On the banks of the rapid stream of time
They set me up to mark its flow ;
I have seen, I have seen them all swept away,
One by one, long, long ago.
Thou child of the airy step and laughing eyes,
Child of the downy cheeks and chestnut hair,

Child of the cherry lips and ringing voice
That gazest on me with the puzzled look,
I'll tick thy four-score years, and then
I'll tick the moment when thy soul shall fly.
E'en while around thee, weird and ancient seer,
Imagination plays, while still the pen
Rests on the lamp-lit page, and with her spell
Silence enthralles the lonely writer's ear,
Thou strik'st the hour of one—one of the night.
Alone with thee, I fear thee—not.
Thou too shalt cease to mark the flight of time
And time shall cease to fly, but I,
When this immortal and eternal soul
Breaks forth from out its bondage-house of clay,
Shall soar on swifter wings than moments fly,
To a bright land beyond the starry sky,
Where Eden's flowers bloom by the fount of joy
Perennial, nor breath of sorrow nor annoy
Can blight them, but thick they cluster on that
 happy shore,
And cruel scythe of time can cut them down
 no more.

Farewell to ——.

O more at eve, sweet ——, no more
 I'll climb thy accustomed hill,
 Yet bright the page of memory's store
 Thy loved, lost scenes shall fill.

She, she is gone, who was the soul
 Of all thy witchery ;
 Broke is the spell, dissolved the charm,
 That bound me fast to thee.

With her no more, sweet ——, no more
 I'll climb thy accustomed hill,
 Yet bright the page of memory's store
 Thy loved, lost scenes shall fill.

Written in the English Cemetery at Pau.



WITHERED roses, blighted in their early
 bloom,
 Here babes, youths, maidens lie ;
 Their parents' hopes, too bright, are quenched
 in gloom,
 Fair flowers the soonest die.

Vainly from island homes, in search of health,
 They came in hope and fear ;
 Vainly weary nights and days friends watched.
 Till their souls grew dark and drear.


And while with grief the father's heart was
 swelling
 At change of the well-known face,
 And while the mother's tears were vainly welling
 Death's silence filled the place.

Then came the coffin, bier, and trappings strange
Of death in alien land ;
The vain regrets—the marble legend,
Left far on foreign strand.

Oh ! weep for those too early lost to love,
Yes, weep ye o'er those tombs ;
No, weep not. They have found a home above
Where the tree of life still blooms.



Song for Yule-tide.

ET the Yule-fire burn bright on the hearth,
 Let hearts be warm with Christmas
 cheer,

Let the aged and careworn partake of the mirth,
 And merry young laughter ring out clear.


But one moment let the silent prayer,
 For friends and kindred far away,
 Arise from Englishmen, where'er
 They celebrate the Christmas day ;
 For all who bear leal English hearts,
 Who speak our English tongue,
 Whether in crowded eastern marts,
 Or western solitudes among ;
 Amid the snows of northern lands,
 Or reeling on unsteady seas,
 Or where the summer southern strands
 Are cooled by the ocean breeze ;

For those who, desolate and lone,
Can name no friend this side the grave ;
For those who on the sickbed groan,
For those whom none but God can save.
If, at the thought, a moment's sadness,
Like cloudy shade in sunny glow,
Pass o'er the heart, the present gladness
Shall brighter, by the contrast, show.

Let the Yule-fire burn bright on the hearth,
Let hearts be warm with Christmas cheer,
Let the aged and careworn partake of the
mirth,
And merry young laughter ring out clear.



By Starlight.

HE autumn night is still and clear,
And though the moon is far away,
The stars so brilliant and so near
Make it more beautiful than day.

From yonder church the vesper psalm
Floats on the listening air of night,
Across the lake, which mirror calm
Reflects unmoved those stars so bright.

Throw but a pebble,—that smooth lake
Reflects the starry host no more,
Thus from our minds mere trifles take
Faith's image of yon heavenly shore.

Maidenly Foreboding.



MOON, whose orb is full still,
 Moon now waning,
 Stay, I pray, thy too swift
 Course restraining.

For ere thy crescent thin forsake
 The night till dawn,
 Self-doomed, a sacrifice I make,
 Girlhood is gone.

'Tis fabled thou Diana art,
 Chaste maiden ever,
 In thy worship I'll take part
 Again, ah ! never.

Oh ! if my heart, like thine, were
 Still fancy free,
 I should not feel the boding care
 That weighs on me.


See how about me cares flock,
Trifles annoy,
How passion cools in wedlock :
All sweets must cloy.

Then love takes flight for ever,
Ne'er to return ;
Hate heart from heart will sever,
In wrath to burn.

Love is like the mirage beckoning
With vision fair,
But sadder the awakening
In desert bare.



A Distant View.

 F far from earth I take my flight,
 Nor clouds might shroud her sphere,
 Till on moonlike disk, in varied light,
 Mapped, lands and seas appear.

Of all those lands, the brightest place
 England to me would be,
 Of all the planet's smiling face,
 Would brightest smile on me.

And nearer if I viewed the isle,
 That spot would clearest shine,
 Where first, an unforgotten while,
 We dwelt—I thine, thou mine.

Knell and Chime.



TOLL ! toll ! toll !

Toll for the year that's gone !

Another leaf from our life's book
is torn.

Toll ! toll ! toll !

Toll for the year that's fled,

Toll for the friendships it hath severèd.

Toll ! toll ! toll !

For kindly hands again to clasp us never,

For loving lips we'll press no more for ever.

Toll ! toll ! toll !

With solemn dirge and sad sweet requiem,

We leave the old year—Farewell to him.

Toll ! toll ! toll !

Fainter and fainter let the knell fall,

Till it dies quite away—'tis silence all.

(12 o'clock strikes.)

Now ring loud and merry peals, cheerily ring,
Salute ye the new year, and friends it shall bring,
Exult and leap, ye bells, in boisterous mirth,
To hail the new year and its joys at their birth.

Ding—dang—dong,


Dang—ding—dong,

Ding—dong—ding,

Ding—dang—dong.



St. Saubeur.


 NOWY mountains, softly sleeping
 'Neath the calm and midnight moon,
 Or your watch eternal keeping,
 Listening to the lulling tune
 Of the Gaves for ever playing,
 In Nature's harmony, their part,
 Ye, too, have a voice conveying
 Words of power to the heart.
 Though your speech upon the ear
 Falls not in acoustic tone ;
 To the soul your voices clear,
 Speak a language all their own.
 Fair the scene with which ye blend,
 And strong the witchery ye lend.
 Gavarnie's grand and noble defile,
 Shaggy pinewoods crowned with snow,
 Scattered chalets, alpine pastures
 Look upon a scene below
 Garnished fair with house and garden,
 Column, bridge, and colonnade

Which bears aloft the quaint inscription*
By forgotten bishop made ;
With hanging cliffs and winding ways
Where oft well pleased the stranger strays.
See, there, beyond the poplars tall
That into rank like soldiers fall,
St. Mary's castle, often kept
Or lost by engine, bow, and lance ;
Last to loose our island grasp,
When Gaul and Briton fought for France,
And there the fortress church of Luz,
With its cagot's den and door,
Held by Frenchman 'gainst the Spaniard,
Held by Christian 'gainst the Moor.
And there the far descending vale,
Scarce lighted by the moonbeams pale.
Floating above, light clouds are seen,
Like quiet thoughts in mind serene.
Calm repose the valley fills,
Restless cares its aspect stills ;
While gentle voices of the night
Speak to him who hears aright.

* Vos haurietis aquas de fontibus Salvatoris.

Maunday Thursday.



FROM vineyard, orchard, farm, and forest
wild,

From hamlets sheltered in remotest
nooks,

From Pyrenean cots to herdsmen known,
Or hunter seeking izzard, wolf, or bear ;
The berret cap of brown and homely spun,
Surmounting curly locks of black, or those
Which threescore summer suns have turned to
grey.

Men of a hardy race inured to toil,
With boys, wives, maidens, blanket-hooded all.
They come to worship, as their sires have done,
With many a strange and superstitious rite ;
But yet, perchance, the homage of the heart
May still be given to Him who cares for all.

Laruns.

The Diligence.



FOLT and jumble, jingle, rumble,
 Goes the diligence ;
 Though the horses gallop and tumble,
 It makes very little advance.

A Sketch from Life.



BESIDE his wooden-yoked oxen, patient
 pair,
 Their sheepskin-covered horns adorned
 with scarlet hair,
 Strides the Basque with blue Kilmarnock bonnet,
 With him his wife, her head with kerchief on it.

The Basque's Farewell.



FAREWELL to the mountains, so rocky
and wild,
My delight and my wonder, my home as
a child ;

Farewell to the mountains I climbed as a boy,
Where my limbs gained their strength, when
strength was my joy.

Farewell, ye loved mountains I leave as a man,
When again shall I see you if ever I can ?
Farewell, I must toil in the town and the plain,
Perhaps never visit your valleys again.

While my eye still can see or my fancy can play,
In dreams of the night or in visions of day,
Ye are drawn on my soul in colours of light,
Which never can fade till they fade in death's
night.

Ave Stella Maris.



ON these rocks by sailors feared,
 Beat by the Biscayan wave,
 Stands the white and kindly image
 Of Mary, mariners to save.
 Fast the rocks on which she stands
 Crumble 'neath the tempests' blow ;
 But the faith which she commands
 Weaker seems not e'er to grow.
 Thus love of heavenly temper pure
 Doth in danger aye endure ;
 Though its faith seem fond and blind,
 It lingers in the trusting mind.

Biarritz.

The Diver.



HE skies have ceased to frown,
 The winds are lulled to rest,
 The waves are calming down
 Upon the ocean's breast.

Resume the work suspended
 For wintry weather's stress,
 And, by his boat attended,
 Let the bold diver dress.

Put on his weighted suit,
 And helmet huge prepare ;
 Let the glass be sound and bright,
 And tube and cord be there.

And man the air pump well,
 On which his life depends ;
 Now, through the gentle swell
 He in the deep descends.

Breakers have ceased to fret,
The troubled wave grows clear ;
He stands on blocks were set
In autumn time of year.


Ten fathoms deep the sea
Is flowing o'er his head,
While he notes fearlessly
How every stone is laid.

As black clouds in a sky
Of dull and bottle green,
The fishes, boats, and ships,
When he looks up, are seen.

'Tis for children and wife
He has quelled every fear,
That he ventures his life
In depths lonesome and drear,

Whence the air that he breathes
Is right glad to be free ;
It bubbles and seethes
As it leaps from the sea.

Spring Floods.

FROM forest glade and rocky glen,
 From fertile valley, hill, and fen,
 From moorland, sandy waste, and field,
 Collect the rains the heavens yield.
 See them gather, overflow,
 O'er meadow, garden, orchard go ;
 The torrent flood is quickly gone,
 The streams are dry—the drought comes on.

So, from secluded mountain valley,
 From cot and village, grange and chalet,
 From woodland, strath, shore, town, and plain,
 France swells her thronging hosts amain.
 Like her waterfloods they grow,
 Threaten all bounds to overflow ;
 Instead of peace bring danger, and,
 Almost like war, exhaust the land.

Will He ?



WILL he love me, mother, say,
 Love me as he loves me now,
 When months and years have passed
 away,
 And time has ploughed my brow ?

Now, when his eye meets mine, it brightens,
 And his hand seeks mine to press ;
 His quick arm around me tightens
 With many a dear caress.

Now, his eager biting kisses
 Heavy rain upon my face,
 My little frame he almost crushes,
 Clasping me in strong embrace.

Will he, can he, mother, say,
 Love me as he loves me now,
 When months and years have passed away,
 And time has ploughed my brow ?

The Little Cloud.



Y love and I were straying,
 Beneath a sky serene ;
 Heaven's azure vault surveying,
 One only cloud was seen.

On that lone isle of mist,
 In the clear ethereal sea,
 The maid her dark eye fixed,
 "You need not stay," said she.

Thus from the sky of friendship,
 From the warm bright heaven of love,
 Dismiss each cloud that enters
 To dim the light above.

Or that small cloud will greater,
 Darker and darker grow,
 Till murky tempests gather,
 And winds, iccladen, blow.

Sunlight on Snow.




THE storms of March have brought unusual rains,

Adour, Garonne, and every nameless
Gave

That hurries forth its tributary flood
Have merged the lowland pastures; while above
The snows are heaped upon each mountain side
Till tallest firs scarce raise their tops from out
The white and wintry load. And now a day
Of fairer promise dawns, and tints the scene
With quiet hues of pure ethereal grain;
Alp upon alp is piled, white steps on white,
Till in the clouds the ladder-top is lost,
Like that which erst the friendless sleeper saw
In Bethel, from his cold and stony couch.
Now on the snowy mass the sunlight blaze
Falls with increasing glory, till 'tis like
The throne which John in Patmos' isle foresaw,
From which the earth and heaven shall flee away.

Zion.

"Te ploravi."

 FROM foreign home he has come far to die,
 Outworn with years and care. He wills
 to lie

In Salem's dust and to her temple nigh.
 Awhile his strength revives beneath her genial
 sky.

If strangely strong the secret bonds which bind
 To his sire's home the least of human kind,
 If only to like generous impulse true,
 His country mightier spells must cast around the
 Jew.

From thence hath there not issued forth a
 power
 To bind e'en alien thoughts, and till this hour
 To sway the simple peasant and the sage,
 The artless child, the man, and hoary, reverend
 age?

The stranger Jew comes daily with a crowd ;
No mourners they, but beggars wailing loud ;
He bathes with tears those stones, perhaps the
base,
And sole sad remnants of Jehovah's dwelling
place.

More lone and desolate than those who wept
In Babel, while their land brief sabbath kept.
His country now sleeps the long sleep of death,
The dry bones wait. There comes no life-
inspiring breath.

Yet 'tis a living death, for hope deferred
In Hebrew breasts revives, and souls are stirred,
Expecting yet once more the lion throne
To rise on Zion's hill, to utmost nations known.

Since Titus stormed her crushed and battered
wall,
And showed no mercy, she has vanquished all
The tribes whose strength was wielded then
from Rome
By her spirit-force. She was their young re-
ligion's home.

But now the Gentile digs about each face
Of her dread temple, explores each sacred
place ;

The very ground has changed, heaped up to hide
Bridge, tower, and terraced street ; Moriah's,
Zion's pride.

Colossal arch half-fallen, and cisterns cool,
Sunk far from heat, aqueduct and pool
All of lost greatness sad assurance make ;
He needs it not ; his heart thus hot within him
spake—


“ Thou ruined city,” it was said, “ to thee
Nations and kings shall come, and thou shalt be
With a new name which God's own mouth
shall name,
In thy Lord's hand a crown and glorious diadem.”

Oh for the serpent-rod which Moses bore,
To work a miracle unheard before—
My people from the house of mammon's bonds
To bring, and gather from their exile through
the lands !

Oh for king David's heart of steel and sword,
To free our land from the false prophet's horde!
Oh for his royal song, more potent still
To thrall the charmèd soul and bend my people's
will!

Oh for the tender tones, the scathing ire
Isaiah's lips gave, seraph-touched with fire!
Here where the steps of kings and prophets
trod
None lifts an arm for thee, thou chosen seat of
God.

Oh for that leader promised long to lead
Our scattered hosts! the Joshua we need!
Oh for the true Messiah of David's line—
The king decreed to rise with power more divine!



Light the Fire.



OW light the dry dead sticks of vine,
Or the great fir cone, full of turpentine,
Till the oak logs blaze with a cheerful
glow ;

Forget the wind, the sleet, the snow ;
Pile on the fuel till it blazes high,
Forget the sombre, murky sky,
Forget the mud, the mist, the rain,
And all that puts the heart in pain ;
And as you watch the flames' merry play,
Your spirits grow bright as a summer day.

Requiem.



HERE Sebastian's rocky fort
 Descends abruptly to the sea,
 In a lonely quiet spot
 Sleep the dead of nations' three.
 Friend and foe and careless stranger
 Walk above their lowly heads ;
 Loud war, sweet peace, safety, danger,
 Alike have been about their beds.
 The wind, the hail, the rain, the snow,
 Sun, moon and stars unnoticed go.
 Foes of honour reconciled,
 They reckon not, triumph, nor defeat,
 Ambition, battlehate, is stilled,
 Rest they ! may their rest be sweet !

On the way Home.

ENOUGH and more of roving, now for
home,

Two years abroad is surely far too much,
If longer we delay, we shall become
Less English than the very French or Dutch.

Enough of life in cafés and hotels,
Of railway, voiture, steam or hack boat,
Of jingling sledges, surly camels, mules,
Of lumbering diligence, or gliding track-boat.

Of sombre gondolas, and gay caïques,
Of branded alpenstocks, and lithe-limbed guides,
Douaniers, gens d'armes, and commissionaires,
Sheiks, dragomans, and I know not what besides.

Of ever-differing time and puzzling coins,
Costumes as varied as are furs or feathers,
Of monuments to world-renowned men,
Confused alas ! a little, one with others.

Of the wild jollity of carnivals,
The grim or gaudy pomp of fasts or feasts,
Of endless churches with chef d'œuvres of art,
Of relics working miracles, by help of priests.

Of Calvaries in marble or in wood,
And also purgatories, mostly plaster,
Altars and pulpits, some few very good,
Others which shew no touch of hand of master.

Chapels or vaults with bones on every side,
In skeletons complete or placed in rows,
Trophies of hideous death the grave should hide,
'Twould say as loud "Thou diest," I suppose.

Of palaces, art galleries, and town halls,
Boulevards, octrois, and reviews and forts,
Of battle fields, grottos, and waterfalls,
Of mineral springs, and such-like sick resorts.

Too long my suffering ears have rung
With mongrel patois, isolation-bred ;
Give me again my native English tongue,
The noblest instrument man's mind hath had.


The ruined strength of far pervading Rome,
The ruined grace of Grecia's subtler sway,
Cannot outweigh the longing wish for home,
Shall not retard us on our homeward way.

I long to clasp the hands of English friends,
I long to see again the English hall,
Its gardens, woods, and farms : and share its
sports,
With oar, rod, rifle, or with bat and ball.

With horses, dogs, and guns, the partridge, hare,
Or fox to chase ; life's work of neighbours round.
Of these and friends, some by the village church
Are lowly laid, since last I there was found.

I long for life at home with all that gives
To English homes their sweet and tender grace.
I'll roam no more. For each his country is
Of all on earth the best, the only place.

Overcast.


 S that the sun? a paler spot
 On clouds of dull dark grey,
 Sometimes seen and sometimes
 not,
 And so on all the day?
 The few big drops of rain
 That drove the bees away
 Made us fear for our pic-nic,
 Made us fear for our hay;
 But the rain
 Never came;
 And this half our life is the way
 Our souls are oft clouded
 In gloom they are shrouded
 By phantoms of dismay,
 Phantoms that vanish away.
 The evil of the day
 Brings enough of sorrow;
 Fret not for the morrow.

Thames by Night.



NIGHT, thou mournest,
 Moon-forsaken,
 In thy deepest sable clad.
 Thames, thou flowest ;
 Thoughts awaken
 At sound of thy ripples sad.

I see thee not,
 The hush I hear
 Of thy waters hurrying down,
 Past this lone spot,
 Darksome and drear,
 Toward the busy town,

Beneath those stones
 Which brain and hand
 Piled o'er thee long ago,
 Where iron groans,
 Wide o'er thee spanned,
 When trains pass to and fro.

Visions of eld
Which Oxford wakes,
Come to me with thy wave ;
Nor come alone,
For Windsor's height
Thy gentle waters lave.

Thou flowest past
Imperial towers,
Whence o'er thy surface steal
Concordant notes,
Thence too come powers
Which utmost islands feel.

Past Gothic fane
Where sleep the dead,
Whose memories must survive ;
Past court and lane
Which good men dread,
Where thief and burglar thrive.

Past lordly home,
And dreary street
Where crowd the humble poor,
And past the dome,
A tomb most meet
For the pair it covers o'er.

And past the docks
Whose gates let in
Choice store from every land,
Where keels thou rock'st,
Lately set in
Polar ice, or tropic sand.

The hammer strokes
Of those that build
Leviathans of steel,
Ring o'er thy waves :
So do the bells
In loud and merry peal.

Reflected in
Thy restless stream,
Myriads of lamps have glowed ;
And with the fire-
Demon's power
Thou oft hast ruddy showed.

At last unto
The silent sea
Thy waters steal away ;
Thus man goes through,
To eternity,
His brief and chequered day.

The Star Shower,

November, 1866.



WITH eager expectation science waits
Thrice in a century perhaps to see
A meteoric shower. Can she hope
That from the banks of Thames November skies
Will lift their wonted veil of cloud and fog?
For once they have. There is Orion's belt
That owns no equal in the firmament,
And there the Bull his bright eye blurred with
tears,
The Pleiads and the Twins, the milky way,
A path close paved with gems, and fit for gods,
No moon to mar it, adding feeble gleam
Of day to the night. What a wealth of suns,
Thick as the flowers that star the robe of May!
Slow wheels the Zodiac its eternal course,
Eastward new stars arise, and in the west
Others have set, but not one starshot streaks
The huge dark dome of night ever the same.

Now Vulgus jeers and says, "'Tis always so,"
And goes to bed. Midnight is near at hand.
Low in the east are seen the scattered stars,
Chaldean shepherds keeping nightly guard
Upon their flocks, by fancy shaped to form
The likeness of a lion, their dreaded foe.
Lo ! sudden darts across the zenith sky
With rocket flight so straight, swift, white and
blue,

A line of starry light, thin, sharp, and clear,
Descending broader to the west it seems
To change its hue to yellow, then to gold,
Orange, and red, and so it disappears.
Another and another, all come forth
Unseen perhaps at first out of the Lion
And from his shaggy mane, as though by stealth
Thrown up some spirit battery unawares
Bombarded thence the other signs around.
The ear is almost cheated to believe
It hears the sound ; intent it listens oft,
But there is none, e'en when the heavens are
scored

With meteor tracks. A glorious spectacle !
Lasting with intervals three hours and more,

The like of which but few will see again.
Where are these fires ? High in the upper air.
How are they kindled ? What is it that burns ?
Mere tiny stones, or planetary dust
In its own orbit circling, like as we
Passing through seas of space, but which the earth
Our good orb-ship sails over without heed ;
Scarce one comes through her airy varnish thin
Into which they, whether bare as pebble stones,
Or clothed with nascent life, miniature worlds,
Rushing with force illimitable, dread,
Are burned up ; that force is turned to fire.
Smoking, inflaming, glowing furnace white,
They pass to finest dust before they reach
In fall the height of Himalayan peaks,
Tallest of all earth's mountain brotherhood—
Thus science teaches, wondering we believe.
There was a day when she too knew them not,
But lonely sentinels who saw the sky
Covered with flying javelins of light,
Foreboded new and bloody wars ; and monks
Keeping with fast their nightly vigils long,
Seeing St. Martin's tears of fire, proclaimed
A portent grave.

The Sunblink.

Inter nubila sol.



When clouds part, which covered o'er
 The landscape shaded cold and grey,
 And parting shed on sea and shore,
 And wooded hills a sunny ray.

We hail the ray that brings a smile
 Along its path where'er it light,
 E'en thus we hail the kindly wile
 That cheers the sad, the dull makes bright.

The word that breaks reserve and gloom
 When gathering at the social board,
 The first kind word which lights a room
 With smiles is worth a miser's hoard.

A Train of Thought.

I.



WHEN on the lake the sportive zephyrs
play,

Its waters in the sunshine sparkling gay,
Across the flood a path of glittering light
Is thrown, a fairy bridge and goodly to the sight.
The watery wavelets in their merry dance
Reflect, or not, the sunbeam's dazzling glance.
What knows that wave which glows like molten
gold
Of all the radiant glory from it rolled,
Obeying changeless laws it cannot break,
Blind to the beauty which it helps to make?

II.

When flowing tones of dulcet melody
According blend in complex harmony,
From each performer roll the air waves round
To every listening ear, a sea of sound.

Mixed, but without confusion, pulses fly
Throughout the air that throbs incessantly.
What knows the atmosphere that bears the notes
Of all the music that upon it floats,
Obeying changeless laws it cannot break,
Deaf to the harmonies it helps to make?

III.

When through void realms of boundless space
the light
Pursues from star to star its arrowy flight
In swiftness passing thought, in length life's day,
Each pulse of ether with it bears away,
Not only all the rainbow's countless hues,
But characters from which we can peruse
The chemistry of suns from whence it wells.
What knows that ether flood of all it tells,
Obeying laws fixed by the highest will,
Bearer of light, but blind unto it still?


IV.

So when through human minds thoughts rise
and flow,
We know not whence they come or whither go.


Or to what others lead in endless chain ;
Their ultimate effect we seek in vain.
The young world's thoughts have still enduring
 power,
Which works all unexhausted to this hour,
And ours, perhaps, in turn may farther reach
Than broadest science of to-day may teach.
Our life's too brief, our wit too short to scan
Our actions' influence on self or fellow-man.
Then let us tread the steps our fathers trod,
Our highest thoughts, like theirs, duty and God.



In Rain.

ID fairest scenes and new as fair,
 Prisoners we watch the falling rain,
 As well your beauties were not there,
 As there to tantalize and pain.
 Blue sky no more, nor sun to shine !
 Waiting we watch, and watching pine,
 The leaden sky pours endless rain,
 Ah ! will it ne'er be fine again ?

 Harmonics.

S the tuned string gives louder sound
 With others in like tune around,
 So does the voice which tells us nought
 But that which we ourselves have thought,
 We give our praise and plaudits free,
 And dream the speaker thinks as we.

Two Sides of a Medal.

The Obverse.



FRIENDS, we love you, let us say it,
 Let us hear you tell us so ;
 Suppress your love and you may slay it,
 In expression it will grow.

The Reverse.

Trust not love when much protested,
 Oft actors nature overdo,
 Love's ne'er of modesty divested,
 And deeds, not words, best prove it true.

Night at Sea.



MIDNIGHT, nor moon, nor star ; the
clouds are low,

On the long waves the ship is heaving
slow,

The wind abeam ; as heels the vessel trim,

It hoarsely roars in shrouds and funnels twin.

The smoke, than dark clouds darker, leeward
streams

With sparks anon, and flakes of fire or flames.

The paddles, struggling with each wave they
meet,

Beat loud, then quiet as the waves retreat ;

The steady engines, smooth revolving, urge

The cleaving prow that presses on the surge.

But look how from the opened furnace doors

The blinding light upon the stokers pours.

Children of Vulcan ! with what zeal they feed

His hungry fires with the fuel they need.

Now o'er the deck, deserted for the night,
Shines through the calmer air the mast-head
light.

Before the pilot, 'tis his chief regard,
Trembles beneath its lamp the compass card.
"A sail ahead," the watch report, and slow
It nearer comes, they hail it from the bow ;
Captains or mates exchanging as they go
A sailor's greeting. Look again below
Where the tall stem disparts the darksome sea,
Which, rising, curls and whitens. Can it be ?
That foam is dashed with soft bright points of
light.


The ship's track glistens in the gloomy night
With faint phosphoric glow. A bucket brings
On board a group of dimly shining things.
What shapes, and all on fire ! Strange dream
Their nightly world to these must seem.
But they are nought to us.—Reckon we true
The Lizard lights should soon be full in view ;
They are. The watch detect a tiny star
Prone on the wave, scarce seen, it is so far,
Slowly it brightens, beaming from thine isle,
Dear England ! thou art mine a little while.

The Condor.

BIRD of unequalled wing now soaring far
 Above the highest summits of Peru,
 O'er Chimborazo, and his neighbour
 throng

Of mountains, based on slumbering fires, and oft
 Shaken by earthquakes fierce, harmless to thee ;
 Now sweeping headlong down Pichincha's cliffs,
 In a brief hour to ocean's sounding shore ;
 Roaming at will along the Andes chain,
 To the Bolivian and the Chilian peaks,
 Sahama tall or Aconcagua chief ;
 Wheeling for hours among their highest crags,
 Watching the herds which crop the wiry grass,
 Ox, sheep, or goat, or hardy guanaco,
 Or patient llama coarse of flesh and hair,
 Alpaca flocks with fleece of glossy silk,
 Or light vicuñas which on glaciers rove,
 Who scarce can go where thine eye doth not
 mark ;

Now on thin air reposing, while the half
And more of all earth's atmosphere lies dense
Beneath. Art thou not like the human soul
In strong excursive flight, in almost more
Than mortal ken? alas! in weakness too.
Poor bird! for thee the Indian sets his snare,
A mass of carrion round with palisades
Artfully closed, thou gorgest thyself full,
And vainly wilt to fly. What now avails
Thy broad and tireless wing, no more to cleave
The pathless air, no more to ride upon
The wild winds rude, and battle with the storm?
Brained by the club, or in the lasso wound,
Ignoble prey thou fallest.



A May Psalm.



THE early showers, the April sun,
 Each their allotted task have done.
 The spring, new woke from winter
 sleep,
 Comes joyous, festival to keep.

The air is soft, the sky is blue,
 Light are the feathery clouds and few,
 Pure and fresh the nascent green,
 Fair as when first by angels seen.

On the rich grass that glistens white,
 Stirred by the breeze that bends the blade,
 Feed flocks and herds. The gardens bright
 Are gaily in new robes arrayed.

The little songsters chirp and trill,
And carol on the verdant sprays,
Yea! every dumb thing sings, until
From all resounds the song of praise

To Him whose power and glory shine
In every flower blossoming,
To Him who works by might divine
The yearly miracle of spring.



The Torchrace.

Quasi cursores, vitæ lampada tradunt.



YIELD the torch, and let another,
 With swifter foot and stronger hand,
 A younger, yet unwearied brother,
 Speed its light along the land.

Thou hast run well, thy course is done,
 Thine arm droops, and the light grows dim,
 Thou must rest, and he must run,
 Till one take the torch from him.

Thus the aged toilworn worker
 Hands the torch of science o'er
 To the fresh and ardent learner
 To run as he ran long before.

Till faint and weary, in his turn,
 He too yields up the torch again.
 And thus the lights of knowledge burn,
 From age to age with brightening flame.

A Fête in June.



CATTERED here and there like
 sheep,
 Fleecy clouds lie
 On the sapphire sky
 So blue, so pure, and deep ;
 Across the glade
 Their welcome shade
 Northward is passing slow.
 The scent is blown
 Of hay new mown
 From meadows down below.
 With fullest leaf,
 Unbrowned as yet,
 The trees are thickly clothed,
 Their shadows fall
 So dark and small,
 Beneath them flocks repose.

When branches sway,
The sun makes way
Between the leaves which quiver ;
Circles of light,
Faint or bright,
Upon the pathway shiver ;
Young fledglings weak
Their short flights take,
Fluttering with joy and fear.
The lowest boughs
Attract to browse
The nimble, graceful deer.
Song birds at rest,
On twig or nest,
Have almost silent been,
In the green light,
And hidden quite
By thickest leafy screen.
What canopy
Of state can vie
With this which spreads above ;
Where the light strays
With fickle rays
Through leaves which gently move ?

How every hue
Shades off into
Lighter or darker tone !
How the dear sky
Peeps from on high
Through tufted branches down !
At length we reach
The lofty beech
To all the vale well known,
Whence we survey
With roving eye
A prospect wide. See where
Cool fountains play,
And toilettes gay
Move through the bright parterre,
Which nymph, and fawn,
And vase adorn.
Cheerful music now is heard,
And dancers beat
With flying feet
The dry, resilient sward.
Tumultuous swells
From the village bells
The often changing chime,

Or loud, or soft,
As breezes waft
The sound from time to time.
Flags are streaming
With colour gleaming
From tall Venetian mast.
Now quickly fly,
As rowers ply
Their oars, the long boats past,
At every splash
The waters flash
And glitter in the sun ;
The joyous crowd
Now shout aloud,
The regatta race is run.
With rollicking,
And frolicking
And copious English cheer.
The day wears out
In rustic sport,
And evening now is here.
The sun is low,
The shadows grow,
Swift trips the hour along ;

The star of eve
Warns them to leave.
With unartistic song,
Reluctant, slow,
In groups they go ;
This day they'll not forget,
When grey-haired sires
By cottage fires,
On winter nights they sit ;
Nor the graceful bride,
Who far and wide
Their simple hearts did sway,
Whose wedding fête,
Merry and late,
They celebrate to-day.

An English Sunset.



THE autumn sun is sinking,
 It verges on the west,
 Its rays the clouds are tinting,
 Over a scene of rest.

The casements of the parsonage
 Reflect the yellow beam ;
 The leaves of the western creeper,
 Though ruddy, ruddier seem.

The ash trees on the lawn,
 Trained for summer bowers ;
 The vine, whose grapes require
 A warmer sun than ours ;

The garden wall whose fruit
 Is ripe, or gathered in ;
 The cedar, whose branches shoot
 Out broad, and flat, and thin ;

Are bathed in mellow light ;
While in the distance grey,
The mere is shining bright
With unexpected ray.

Athwart the glowing west
Juts out the yew tree's bough,
His roots are in the dust
Of those who saw him grow.

Cross, urn, and plain headstone,
With light are flooded o'er,
And the long heaps, withy-bound,
Where sleep the humble poor.

The quickly fading glory
Shines on the vicar's brow,
His couch is at the window,
For he is feeble now.

The gentle breath of eve
Lifts his white locks of hair,
As he turns to see the church,
His hard toil placed it there.

The Sabbath sun's last light
Is creeping up the spire,
Sweet solemn notes to-night
Sound from the village choir.

The vicar knows each grave,
But his eye rests on one—
His own, where sleeps his wife,
Since early spring began.

Murmurs the aged Christian :
“ And there from care released—
The shout of them that triumph,
The song of them that feast.”

His toil was hard and long,
Now calm and still his sleep ;
He sings that festal song,
Fond hearts ! ye can but weep.

Hundreds surround his grave,
And tears bedew their cheeks.
He loved them—he is gone—
His silent voice still speaks.

“MORIENDO VINCES.”



WITH toilsome march and heat of day
oppressed,
His heart within him flagging, but his
soul

Buoyant and brave, a Christian soldier comes.
Long was the road, and steep, and foe-beset ;
Before him now a massive portal stands,
An arch of triumph, blocking up the way ;
His comrades far behind. He, looking through,
Beholds new scenes which pen nor pencil can,
Unless 'twere dipped in living tints of light,
Portray. He passes in alone. Then straight
The door is shut, and lagging followers find
Upon it sculpt, “ Here lies — ”

“ Until He come.”

Nightfall.



THOUGHTS which through the fer-
 vent brain,
 Teeming, tropic.
 Thoughts which change and change again,
 Kaleidoscopic.
 Thoughts which in procession slow
 To thoughts succeed.
 Shadowy thoughts which come and go
 With little heed.
 Now ye fade. With stealthy pinion
 Sleep comes. She brings
 Soothing calm, and sweet oblivion,
 Beneath her wings.



Acrostics.

ENGLAND.

AROUND this island we love so well,
Girded with waves of a dark rolling sea,
Now wintry tempests rage and swell,
England ! the Strong One keepeth thee
Safe in thy sea-girt citadel.

And oft, thou island we love so well,
Girded with waves of a dark rolling sea,
None else than he, let banded foemen tell,
England ! the Strong One hath kept thee
Safe in thy sea-girt citadel.

And still, thou island we love so well,
Girded with waves of a dark rolling sea,
Now and henceforth, though countless foes assail,
England ! the Strong One will keep thee
Safe in thy sea-girt citadel.

"INSANIRE JUVAT."

ALL aglow ! what a dazzle and a blaze !
Gazing crowds all agape ! what amaze !
Now their faces they upraise,
Every child is in a craze at the bright gas blaze,
Shining for the birthday of the Prince of Wales.

SPRING.

ALL the landscape laughs in light,
Gentle zephyrs soft are blowing,
Now joy and life are freely flowing,
Early flowers are opening bright.
Stilly float in ether blue

Silver clouds and golden too.
Why dost thou stay ? Come forth, my sweet,
Early gowans 'neath thy feet,
Exultant soars the lark, unseen on high,
To welcome thee with music from the sky.

THE WIND.

AH! what a wag the wind is, whispering in the
leaves,
Groaning in the chimney, and sighing in the
eaves,
Now in the belfry moaning, the bells he almost
rings,
Crewhile in forest roaring, as he the great
boughs swings,
Singular fellow that wind is, he does such
comical things.

ÆOLIAN music on those wires,
Gusty winter winds are playing,
Now it approaches, now retires,
Every blast to us conveying
Some strange discordant harmony.

NOVEMBER V.

ALL the street's in a rare uproar,
Guy Fawkes is there at the door,
Now the man hollows quite hoarse,
Every boy follows, of course,
Shouting hurrah.

A CONTRAST.

AZURE the sky, soft fleecy clouds sail o'er
the sunny sea,
Gaily the rippling wavelets tinkle on the rocks
and sand.
Not so when mighty Auster drives huge waves
relentlessly,
Each wave a flood, foam crested, comes racing
to the land,
Seethes, hisses, roars, then thunders on the
strand.

Nox erat et cœlo fulgebat luna sereno
Inter minora sidera.

AS Luna, with full orb and bright,
Goes peerless 'mong the stars above
None second to the queen of night,
E'en so, below, doth Love
Surpass each less delight.

A QUESTION.

AND now the night is starless, and now the
trees are bare,
Gaunt arms and black projected in the air;
Now when the night is gloomy, now when the
night is chill,
Each pleasant path the dead leaves dank do fill,
Say, ——, dost thou love me still?

AMARANTH and Asphodel,
Goodly flowers above,
Never blossom, poets tell,
Except by the well-
Spring of love.

AH ! if wings ! Ah ! if wings,
Great wings were given to me !
Now, had I wings, strong, swift wings,
Eagle's wings !
Soon would I fly to thee.

AS one lone star through rifted cloud
Gleams fairest on the pilgrim's eye,
None other seen of all the host on high,
E'en so alone thou art to me most nigh,
Soul answereth soul, it doth not in the crowd.

AS earth who kept in coaly mine
Great stores of former summershine
Now gives it forth to glow. Just so
Each noble heart delights to pay
Some kindness of an earlier day.

CHARING CROSS BRIDGE.

ABOVE the red, red signals glow,
 Giant engines come and go,
 Mightily they screech and roar. Meanwhile
 below,
 Ebbing, filling, high or low, to and fro,
 Swift or slow, dark and silent waters flow.

Above the stream of life doth flow,
 Great London's myriads roll along;
 Now floods, now ebbs the restless throng—
 Ever below, to and fro, high or low,
 Swift or slow, Thames' troubled waters go.



————— laborum
 Dulce lenimen.

AN interval in irksome toil,
 God's calm repose to mortals given,
 Now the worn and weary cease to moil;
 Earnest of sweeter rest in heaven—
 Sweet Sabbath Day.

WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

A THOUSAND years with prayer meet,
Gloria, psalm, and anthem sweet,
Never hast thou failed to greet
Each worshipper whose feet
Stood on thy holy ground.
And still among thy shafts so proud,
Grandly reverberates the solemn song,
'Neath lofty arches, echoing long.
Each storied monument aloud
Seems to repeat the sound.

Around thy choir the mighty dead
Grouped strangely, moulder into dust,
Nor fail thy memories of the great and just,
E'en on the trifler's spirit awe to spread—
Silent, he stands, with bare'd head.
A thousand years thou yet shalt last,
Glorious, close-linked with England's past.
Nor hath she ages so remote thou canst not
blend,
East, west, south, north, shall still in crowds attend
Saxon Edward, at thy fane.



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